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ASTORIA, OREGON, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1883.

PRICE, FIVE CENTS.

HOW TO TALK WITH STRANGE IN-DIANS.

A Sign Language Which Is a Very Good Medium for Exchanging Thought.

white-tailed buck?"

This question was sent from one of the government offices in Washington to a government officer in Montans. It was referred to Sheriff John J. Healy of Benton, who was considered the best-informed white man in the northwest concerning the universal sign language of the Indians. When Catholic missionaries were trying to make a written language of the Blackfoot tongue, in order to facilitate the study of it and to give the Bible to the tribes speaking that language. Healy said to one of the

"Why not use the sign language every tribe?

"The government," said Mr. Healy, "is making an effort to instruct those whom it sends among the Indians in the use of the sign language, and that is why a request was sent for the signs which stand for a soldier, a bear, and other objects. The vocabu-lary—if that word may be used here is sufficiently extensive to meet the wants of those using it. A white man and an Indian meeting in the wilder ness, with no other means of commu-nication than the sign language, would be able to tell each other where they started from, where they were going, how long they had been on the road, whom they had fallen in with, what they did, whether they found game plenty, what they shot, when they expected to reach their destinations, and to hold just such a chat as two Yankees would have upon meeting under like circum-stances. The signs for things not material—for conditions, emotions, attributes, and the like are so ample that one seldom has to hesitate for the want of a sign. There are signs for is many verbs and qualifying words as are needed in the uses to which the language is put.

Many of the signs are so peculiarly appropriate that a narrative in which they are used becomes graphic. Here we have the story of a fight be-Here we have the story of a fight between soldiers and Sioux Indians. The sign for a body of soldiers is the chenched fists held in front of you with the palms and doubled up fingers facing ahead. The number of men is indicated by a system of rapid enumeration on the fingers. The open hand drawn edgewise across the throat tells that the enemy is a band of Sioux, the size of which is indicated. Raising and lowering the chenched fists while they are clenched fists while they held in the position to repre resent soldiers tells us that the advance has begun. The march con-tinues till the clapping of the hands says that shots were fired, and tells how hotly the buttle was waged. The fists celain, silks, and ivory—All of these again come to the position for soldiers, separate while marching, face toward each other, and come together with the face toward the sgeaker's face. The red men have been specified as a specific ceam, silks, and ivory—All of these are the resources and advantages which will straightway place Washington Territory in the fore front along with the most prosper. rounded and made prisoners. How many of them were killed? one of the listeners asks in sign, and the narrator indicates the number, and goes on to tell how one of the chiefs was of kid shoes in twenty-four hours. It wounded, and what was thought of can keep its father busy advertising his chances for recovery.

"An advantage possessed by the sign language is that it can be used bed manufactured, simultaneously. It can make the author voices could reach. The signs needed for communication at a distance week and not be feeling at all well are few and of such a nature that It can crowd to suffocation the smok they cannot well be misunderstood, ing car of a railroad train with in-A white man sees a party of Iudians dignant passengers between two approaching, but a long way off. He stations. It can cause its father to throws his blanket over the muzzle of be insulted by every second-class his gun and waves it back and forth boarding-house keeper in the city in front of him. That means 'stop.' who "never takes children." It can His next signal tells the Indians that make an old bachelor in the room adhe wants one of them to advance ahead of the others and talk with him. The blanket is thrown to the penitentiary for two years. It can, ground, indicating a desire to sit to-gether on it and smoke the pipe of peace. If the Indians are friendly, seek the companionship of a locomothey send one of their number shead and the others come galloping after him, firing their guns over the head of the challenging party. This means cheapest and simplest gynasium in that they are coming with empty the world—one that will exercise have lost their lives by thinking this is a flat piece of steel notched on one firing of guns meant hostility, reside, fitted tightly into a wooden turning the fire, and then being frame, and after being greased on killed by the angered red men. A both sides with a bacon rind, rubbed bostile approach is with the gun in hand, ready to be brought instantly on a saw buck.

to the position for firing.
"But these signals are hardly a the signs used in conversation are the North Santiam, about ten miles similar to others, a slight deviation above Nehama. Capt. Smith was giving a different meaning. there seems to be an element of pic-torial suggestiveness in most of the signs, a good many of them are wholly arbitrary. I have given some little attention to the sign language of the deaf mutes, and I believe that the sign language of the Indians is as complete for their uses as is that of the deaf mutes for theirs. The deaf mutes have the advantage of being able to resort to an alphabet when is not sufficient to communicate ideas, but the exact words muet be indicated. There are instance of a sign having almost opposite meanings in the two languages. Thus the deaf mute sign for happiness is to bring the right hand over the heart, and making a patting motion, indicating a quickening of the heart through Almost the same would be understood to by an Indian as meaning sickness short, labored breathing. The Indian sign for fool-ishness is to go through the motion of feeling around with the open palm of your right hand in an empty skull held just above your own. The same sign, with a little more wavy motion of the hand, means drunken-ness. Every Indian understands that?

The People's Dollar.

The people's silver dollar has a hard time of it. In so-called "financial circles" it is traduced and maligned most shamefully. Everybody seems to be down on it except the working "What are the signs for a soldier, as bear, a black-tailed buck, and a satisfied with it

cial circles" that the president, the secretary of the treasury and the directors of the mint will recommend to the next congress that the coinage of silver dollars be discon-tinued. Preparatory to this the newspapers of a certain class are losing no opportunity to place in the most prominent manner possible the enormous amount of silver dollars in the United States treasury.

Statistics of the United States mint, however, make quite a differ-ent showing. They show that while millions of dollars in gold are paid "Why not use the sign language instead, so as to have a medium of communication with the Indians of that while silver is practically locked The good man replied that the sign language would be far better than any other for meeting the wants of the man replied that the sign nored by those prejudiced against it, and never sent out except on imperative departs. the missionaries, but the great cost of making a book in which it could be studied made its use out of the question. a small proportion of the silver coinage in the United States treasury now available

shows \$250,000,000 in gold coin and bullion in the vaults and only about Is not a "cure all." It is a blood \$30,000 and in silver deliver the same of the Blood. \$30,000,000 in silver dollars and bul-

Commenting on the proposed ac-tion of the Treasury officials, in recmmending the discontinuance of the coinage of the people's dollar, the Mining Review very aptly says: "If the Treasury officials are called upon to recommend the suspension of silver coinage on the ground that the urrency now in the Treasury proves that already more is coined than is sufficient for the wants of the people, consistency would demand with equal cree and for the same reasons, upon he same grounds, that the coinage of gold should also be suspended. The fact that this discrimination is made, and this battle waged constantly in one direction proves that it is in the interest of selfishness and gain at the expense of industry."

A Favored Section.

Forty-five millions of acres of timber coal, pasture, and mountain lands; mines of precious metals, quarries of limestone, marble, granite, slate, sand are maritime opportunities unsurpassed commerce; in a line to absorb the trade of Alaska in fish, fur, cedar, and gold; to obtain the largest share

What Can Baby Do?

in the newspapers for a nurse. It

An exchange observes that the A good many white men every bone and muscle in the body-

WINES

HARDWARE Ship Chandlery:

satisfied with it.

It is stated in the aforesaid "finan-

The report of the Treasury Depart-ment made on the 1st of November,

"But these signals are hardly a Capt. Smith, sometimes called part of the sign language. Many of "Elkhorn Smith," died Saturday on While about seventy years of age, and was

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